

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00

NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 SAM-01 AF-08

DHA-02 ORM-02 AID-05 IO-13 /090 W

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R 071421Z MAY 76

FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7037

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMCONSUL OPORTO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA

USMISSION NATO

DIA WASHDC

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

C O N F I D E N T I A L LISBON 3042

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PO

SUBJECT: POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS: COSTA GOMES DENIES BACKING
"GRAND COALITION"

REF: (A) PONTA DELGADA 196 (DTG 050040Z MAY 76)

(B) LISBON 2996 (DTG 051613Z MAY 76),

(C) LISBON 2804 (DTG 291458Z APR 76)

SUMMARY: PRESIDENT'S OFFICE DENIED MAY 7 RECENT REPORTS
THAT COSTA GOMES WAS PRESSURING PARTY LEADERS TO ACCEPT
"GRAND COALITION" INCLUDING COMMUNISTS. PRESIDENT
NONETHELESS CAN BE EXPECTED TO CONTINUE EFFORTS TO ENSURE
COMMUNISTS A ROLE IN GOVERNMENT. END SUMMARY.

1. PRESIDENTIAL DENIAL: PRESIDENT'S OFFICE ISSUED

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STATEMENT MAY 7 DENYING RECENT REPORT IN CONSERVATIVE
WEEKLY "TEMPO" THAT COSTA GOMES HAD PROPOSED TO

MAJOR PARTY LEADERS CREATION OF "GRAND COALITION GOVERNMENT" INCLUDING COMMUNISTS. ACCORDING TO STATEMENT, COSTA GOMES HAD EXPRESSED "PERSONAL OPINION" THAT A MINORITY SOCIALIST GOVERNMENT WOULD ENCOUNTER DIFFICULTIES AND THAT, TO HIM, "A COALITION CENTERED ON THE PS, AND INCLUDING, AT LEAST, ONE PARTY TO ITS LEFT AND ONE TO ITS RIGHT," WAS PREFERABLE. THE PRESIDENCY ALSO DENIED THAT COSTA GOMES HAD WARNED PARTIES THAT, SHOULD COALITION SUCH AS HE DESCRIBED NOT BE FORMED, PORTUGAL COULD SUCCUMB TO MILITARY DICTATORSHIP.

2. AZORES: AZORES REGIONAL JUNTA DELEGATION SEEKING REVISION OF AUTONOMY STATUTES RECENTLY APPROVED BY COUNCIL OF MINISTERS MET BRIEFLY WITH PRESIDENT COSTA GOMES MAY 6 (REF A). FOLLOWING AUDIENCE, SOCIALIST DELEGATION MEMBER MARTINS GOULART STATED HE HAD HOPES FOR "POSITIVE EVOLUTION" OF PROBLEM. DELEGATION WILL MEET MAY 7 WITH PRIME MINISTER, TO WHOM REGIONAL JUNTA IS DIRECTLY RESPONSIBLE. MEETING WITH ARMY CHIEF OF STAFF EANES WAS ALSO TENTATIVELY PLANNED. IN A RELATED DEVELOPMENT, PS ISSUED STATEMENT MAY 6 ACCUSING AZOREAN PPD OF "IRRESPONSIBILITY" IN WITHDRAWING FROM REGIONAL JUNTA AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT BODIES. STATEMENT CHARGED PPD HOPED, BY PROVOKING POLITICAL CRISIS IN ISLANDS, TO REVERSE IN FORTHCOMING REGIONAL ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS THE LOSSES IT HAD SUFFERED IN THE PARIL 25 LEGISLATIVE ELECTION. AZORES ARMY CHIEF BG MENESES TOLD ARMA THAT ARMY WAS WORRIED ABOUT DETERIORATION OF SITUATION AND IS PREPARING FOR POSSIBLE REACTION BY ISLANDERS.

3. RETURNEES OCCUPY HOTELS: RESPONDING TO WHAT THEY CONSIDERED UNSATISFACTORY GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO THEIR DEMANDS FOR INCREASED FINANCIAL SUPPORT, ANGOLAN RETURNEES LATE MAY 6 OCCUPIED FIVE QUALITY HOTELS (REF B). THEY WERE FORCIBLY REMOVED BY POLICE AFTER A STAY OF SEVERAL HOURS. GOP HAD ANNOUNCED MAY 6 IT WOULD INVESTIGATE ACTIVITIES OF GOP SUPPORT AGENCY, WHICH RETURNEES HAD ACCUSED OF INEFFICIENCY AND IRREGULARITIES. ALSO ANNOUNCED AS PLAN TO REGISTER ALL
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RETURNEES BY THE END OF MAY TO DETERMINE WHO REMAINED ELEGIBLE FOR GOVERNMENT BENEFITS.
THE TRADEGY OF THE EUROPEAN COUNTRIES IS PRECISELY THAT NOT ALL OF THEM HAVE A SOCIALIST PARTY WITH THE SAME CAHRACTERISTICS AS THE PORTUGUESE SOCIALIST PARTY, WHICH IS THE DOMINANT PARTY OF THE LEFT.
-- ITALIAN PROBLEM: THE CURRENT IMPASSE IN ITALIAN POLITICAL LIFE REFLECTS THE ABSENCE OF A SOCIALIST PARTY WHICH CAPTURES POPULAR ASPIRATIONS AND OFFERS A DEMOCRATIC SOCIALIST ALTERNATIVE.

4. EAST GERMANS EMBARRASSED: PORTUGUESE CUSTOMS
AUTHORITIES MAY 6 OPENED CRATES CONSIGNED TO EAST
GERMANY EMBASSY IN LISBON, DISCOVERING LARGE QUANTITIES
OF WHAT WAS DESCRIBED AS "MODERN COMMUNICATION AND
LISTENING EQUIPMENT." GOP SPOKESMAN STATED THAT
MOVE WAS MADE FOLLOWING TIP THAT CRATES CONTAINED
MATERIAL "WHICH COULD AFFECT NATIONAL SECURITY."
CUSTOMS AUTHORITIES HAD INFORMED EAST GERMANS
OF THEIR INTENTION TO OPEN AND INVITED EMBASSY
TO SEND OBSERVER. GERMANS REFUSED, AFFIRMING THAT
CARGO, AS DIPLOMATIC BAGGAGE, WAS INVIOABLE.

5. COMMENT: COSTA GOMES'S DENIAL THAT HE HAS BEEN
ACTIVELY PROMOTING "GRAND COALITION" IS NOT TAKEN SERIOUSLY
BY KNOWLEDGEABLE PORTUGUESE OBSERVERS. AS HE MADE CLEAR TO
AMBASSADOR IN APRIL 29 MEETING (REF C), HE CONTINUES TO BE-
LIEVE PCP PARTICIPATION IN THE GOVERNMENT IS INDISPENSABLE.
HE CAN BE EXPECTED TO EXPRESS HIS "PERSONAL OPINION" IN
THIS REGARD.
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To: STATE
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